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ABSTRACT

The search for community and the development of democracy through civic participation are the binding glue of the nation. The Cooperative Extension Service was formed in recognition of that fact, and its goal was to preserve community as technical capacity increased. During the 20th century, community has been lost to cyberspace and commercialism, and society and democracy have been weakened. Community developers need to become professionals instead of practitioners and develop a new paradigm of community to deal with the new conditions of community. Such a paradigm would focus on establishing social communities of face-to-face contact by replacing the current "surrogates" for social relationships with group interactive systems. Such systems would foster social capital; reengage service as a central community development principle through a national service corps whose curriculum would be developed by land grant and community colleges; encourage and develop the arts as a central focus for the restoration of communalism, values sharing, and caring; help to expose the global impacts of actions; and support sustainable development that enables the entire world to gain access to the benefits of new technology and ensures that one segment of the world is not robbed to enhance another. (TD)

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Community for a New Century

Community on the Cusp of New Millennium and the Dawn of a New Century

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Keynote Address for the Community Development Society

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It is indeed ironic to be giving a speech to the Community Development Society at the dawn of a new century and the opening of a new millennium. The irony is in the fact that the term community development is just about one century old. Community development arose from the need to create a set of institutions and practices to deal with a changing industrial form that threatened to wipe out the American democratic farm based culture. We must also be reminded that nearly 1000 years ago organized religion, the major religious based institutions and deity and regal based governing was giving way to a new form of secular governance

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that was at its core more democratic in its form and scientific at its core. We need to think about the origins of community development to understand that we are again at the point of inspecting those points of origin in order to gain some perch on the future that is overwhelming us. Just as at the time of the Magna Carta in 1066 a wave of new ideas were sweeping the world about the role of institutions and organizations in governance. So too, at this time, were citizens fearful of new technologies that were overwhelming and transforming communications and life styles? Communications at the time of the Magna Carta were opening with Asia and new forms of food would penetrate Europe along with new ideas and eventually gun powder and new forms of warfare. More importantly, the organization of community took on a new form. Villages were reorganized in a system to produce larger quantities of food with more central distribution systems designed to feed people in central settlements, later called cities. As this transformation occurred in Africa, Asia and the even in the yet discovered worlds of the Americas, new ethics were created and new forms of social organization designed to accommodate the new settlement pattern. As anthropologist now point out people across the world were in very active communication and trade across the Pacific and Atlantic well over 1000 years ago. It was in support of this new mode of trade and communication that cities arose. Thus 1000 years ago, the seedbed of community development emerged to support with the professionalization of settlements. Now at the turn of the century, the origins of community development are similarly transparent.

Almost 100 years ago the Smith-Lever Act created the Cooperative Extension Service. The rationale for the Act was not, as many suppose, to create a group of technocrats to modernize agriculture. No, the Cooperate Extension Service started to help organize and stabilize communities that were in the midst of technological change. The industrial revolution had already hit the farm. As we know, the yeoman farmer and the small town way of life were considered the cornerstones of the nation. Thomas Jefferson and our forefathers believed so deeply in the small town and farm that they decided to deliberately remove the nation's capital from New York City. Their reasons for this were very simple. They saw cities as the antithesis of democratic life. Thus, the Smith Lever Act was a follow up to this thinking. We needed to preserve the small town farm way of life to preserve the democracy. The consequences of the founding father's action on American settlements and institutions are still with us. The land grant colleges for the most part are in small towns. State capitals are not, with a few exceptions, the prime city in a State. In simple terms, small community and the values of farm life were considered the core of the democracy.

The Smith Lever Act was in recognition of a simple truth that lies at the core of the community development society. We as a nation have no particular or peculiar assets. We have no national religion. We have no name. We have no institutions that we, Americans invented, other than the national park. We have no common racial or ethnic identity. What we, as Americans, have in common is the constant search for democratic community. This search for community and the development of democracy through civic participation is the binding glue of the nation. It is the only thing that we offer as authentic to the rest of the world. The Pilgrims established community as the bedrock of their new democracy. They did this because they had seen and live through the erosion of community in the pursuit of mercantile-trade based wealth that was destroying both community and the social fabric of their nations. The Smith Lever Act was a straightforward recognition of these same facts brought current to the beginning of the industrial era. Extension agents were community builders. As a result, the focus of early extension agents was the organizations of institutions like the Grange and the Future Farmers etc. The goal was to preserve community as we increased technical capacity. Cooperative Extension was the first social national capital

building organization ever authorized by Congress. Congressmen Smith and Lever would be astounded by how their visions was all too successful on the technology introduction side of the equation and scarcely they would not recognize our community building efforts as credible. We have increased technology and we have done harm to community. Thus we enter and new millennium with institutions that do not suit the future or current environment. Just as a new charter was crafted to move England out of institutional decay so we now require some new Magna Carta—perhaps written by Bill Gates. We need a new Community Building Institution, like the Cooperative Extension, to create the social fabric required to adjust to the new century. Cooperative extension agents recognized that the keys to forming community for Americans since we had no common history or institutions was to: 1) create a common sense of social fabric with common goals to create and equal democracy, 2) develop a common language or form of communication so that the struggle for community could be shared, and 3) establish a set of boundaries spatially and psychological that would bind institutions and people to a common vision. It is no accident that the only full-scale wars going on in the world today are over community sovereignty from Palestine, to Kosovo and Sudan. People are dying over their rights to live in community under secular rule to form a more perfect common destiny. We as Americans have no right or role in these struggles unless we can offer the world the notion of civil community based on the above principles. As we move into a new century, the notion of community development becomes central to our national survival. We must gain a new perspective on community to serve the future—not merely look back at the past.

Creating the Future

As we enter the new century it is now clear that we have the capacity to create and destroy in equal measure. Each of our new tools from atomic energy to the computer brings with it enormous potential and great risks. We can now fish out the seas with super trawlers. We can kill at great distances with computer sabotage of air routes or interrupting power systems. We can do enormous harm to the environment as we sip coffee—in fact, more coffee than the producers can grow in environmentally sound ways. Our eating habits are destroying vast areas of forest as people all over the world become meat and milk consumers. As we destroy animal and plant life to reach a lifestyle based on consumption, we are increasingly destroying life style and life forms. As we reach out globally as consumers, we are also sending out values across the globe from America. Computer futurists predict that American English will wipe out almost all forms of language by the middle of the next century because of the need for a common computer Internet language that will be both audio and visually communicated. In essence, we stand at the crossroads to invent a future or be invented by it. We may become the Truman Show. In order to take control of our destiny we will have to create institutions to govern our cyber, social and physical space. The first few years of the new century will surely lay the base for the form of community that will emerge as dominant for the next century and beyond. Let's take some glimpses at where we are headed.

Surrogate Love

Western modernity has become fascinated with the search for substitutes for the basic ingredients of familial affection. We now have found surrogates to almost every form of human interaction. We have others watch and care for our children from birth to school age. We use others to walk our dog, clean our homes and shop for us. We employ physical and financial fitness coaches, marriage coaches and child testing coaches. We have more hired

people monitoring our life than we have real family members in our lives. We deal with those we care for with substitute affection as well. We assign our old to senior facilities and our young to Little League or Soccer centers, but we do not show up to watch either. Of course, we expect the substitute caregiver to provide the affection we do not or we sue them. We have a new breed of home organizers to advise us on these relationships and to provide guidance in managing them. If all of this fails we have a substitute loving family via talk radio, where we can say almost anything to people we do not know for millions to hear. Our radio host acts like Uncle Charlie or Aunt Mary and abuses us for the advice they give. In fact, we have grown so accustomed to substitute affection; we want it as a replacement for real affection as the Internet is demonstrating.

Substitute Knowledge

Community has no physical boundary any longer. Marshall McLewn and others for told this with the "media is the message." Mediums now carry community. We have fragmented community into bite sized bits. No one reads the entire newspaper. In fact, few people read beyond the first paragraph. Truth is communicated at the checkout stand headline at the super supermarket. We know only what we want to know. We can organize to receive information on any topic and avoid knowledge in almost all others. We can cyberize our news over the Internet or take magazines and news periodicals that agree and reinforce our own point of view. As a result, we are developing a nation of tribes. Each tribe wants to dominate the others via information without knowing or carrying to know much about anyone else's point of view. Some tribes believe they have divine rights to dominate the others because they are Aryans, anti-abortionists, pro-environment. They speak only to one another and as a result de-humanize and depersonalize anyone who does not share their point of view. So it is easy to do damage to a construction project you do not like or to harm a woman who is doing things we do not approve of with her body. As knowledge becomes more fragmented the question of sharing base information with common forms of communication will be more difficult in the next century. We have to find ways to achieve this or abandon the hopes for a single nation based on a united set of communities.

Artificial Community

Housing developers have learned the trick of community building. They use a name that creates the right image for the consumer. As a result, we have Forest Lake or Lake Forest, or Mountain Home. All of the words are to convey an image that a consumer will buy as a place. In fact, they seldom contain any trees, water, or hills. In former times the name came from the activity or the backdrop of a community. But no one would call a community Coaltown or Irontown today. Certainly Railtown would be equally unappealing from the ad agency point of view. Community is now a commodity. Community can be bought and sold like pork bellies. Big institutions, like Disney and Ford Motor Company, are now buying and building communities. This is no accident. Selling lifestyle is now part of the American Dream. It is sold in the form of differences not diversity. We are sold gated and walled communities. We are sold senior and age restricted communities. We are sold communities based on security, prestige and social lifestyle features. We are never sold community on the basis of neighbors and participation and social capital formation. In essence, we are sold. We are not asked to participate. We see miles of houses that are all pastel gray, blues, and peach. We are told that the buyers prefer this form of living. Yet, it is hard to imagine so many buyers with exactly the same taste for colors and garages. Neighbors and neighborhoods have been equally

commodified as a utility. Social forecasters believe that housed will soon be provide at the building cost because the developer can make his profits on selling other services like electricity, cable television and computer hook ups along with mail order products and other consumer systems.

It is no wonder that voting is deteriorated to the point that it has when no one builds any portion of the community and when all aspects of community are managed by an association, security guards or real estate agents. Few communities cater to the cross section of life cycles that are necessary to sustain a community. If the young, the old, the handicapped and the racial and economic classes do not share the same space by design, they can never share the same vision of democracy or the same aspirations for the American Dream. The pre-suburban American Dream found in our balanced and social integrated community of the middle of this century is now shared by few and lived by almost no one.

Community, the heart of community development is required for the nation to take its rightful place as a world leader. The real might of America is in this Dream, not in the strength of the American Army. Now, the Community Development Society will have to reassert its role for the nation in rekindling the central tenants of our democracy by paying attention to the nation of community as the base for the national destiny, just as Smith and Lever saw it almost 100 years ago.

Paradigms Lost

As the Community Development Society enters a new era it needs to refresh its community paradigms to deal with the new conditions of community. At no recent time has the notion of community been so important as it is today and on the cusp of this century. We, as a Community Development Society have to design the paradigms that will create a future not of peril but one of possibilities. The perils are clear. We will have information warfare. We will have electron migrants who will cross international frontiers and do the intellectual work of many Americans from distant shores. We will have new virtual reality communities that will be so powerful that they will be addictive for the users. People will abandon their jobs and homes to live fantasy lives in cyberspace. The cyberspace that captures some as addicts will liberate the handicapped and the elderly to experience life that will ease their pain and allow them to live without sedation in comfort. These new technologies will emulate and penetrate community so well that the restoration of the face and contact community will become paramount to the future of democracy.

As a result, we will have to forge a new contemporary paradigm for the development and restoration of community. These new paradigms will be forged from the past but it has to meet the challenges of the future.

The Paradigm of Connection in community—Inlook vs. Outlook

Technology can reach out but it cannot touch. As a result, the Community Development paradigm of the past that created linkages among people will have to be restored. The foundation of community development was the formation of connective social capital institutions. As the next century opens, the Community Development Society will need to focus its collective energy on establishing social communities of face-to-face contact. This will be hard to do since cybercultural community will be a countervailing force. However, we

will need to develop a new set of institutions that will act as places for communal family formation. As the nuclear family plays a smaller role in the development of human character, a new set of communal nurturing institutions will have to be formed. These institutions will look in to the community and provide a community Inlook much like the old YM and YWCA's. They will resemble the Settlement Houses in low-income areas of thirty years ago. However, these new institutions will be powered by a strong community development paradigm that regards the community as the societal bedrock in the same way the nuclear family was the touchstone of the past. These institutions will serve as the social glue for all income groups as socializing agents. These new institutions will be aimed at finding places for identity and self-assurance in a cyber world that neglects and thwarts face to face and group problem solving. The new community institution will become the heart of new housing developments and the replacement for the old neighborhoods. We will have to develop an entirely new generation of community developers who will work for the formation and maintenance of community institutions. They will not provide substitute care but organize group interactive systems to provide for communal social capital. These workers will view network building as their full time occupation. The new community developers will be valued members of the society because of their advanced training in community systems. They will anticipate community issues and needs. They will be social capital entrepreneurs who build the framework of the community. They will build new institutional devices in the community and help overhaul existing institutions so that they can meet community needs. In essence, we will have a new network of community workers who work on the Inlook of community not merely on the Outlook. Community values institutions will become as important as the quality of schools. As a result, the community as a quality will replace community of quantity. As community developers our role will be to insure that the community is recyclable and regenerating. We will take the charge of intergenerational living seriously and work to promote housing, education and social activities throughout the community that span and do not separate generations.

The Restoration of the Participation Paradigm

No loss is more painful in our modern culture than the loss of social connection through participation. We, as the Romans did nearly 1000 years ago, have out sourced our own participation in our democracy. We pay others to do our civic essentials. Perhaps the last preserve of the egalitarian democracy is jury service. Now, there are those who propose that we pay stand-in's for this civic duty. We already have a professional army; something that would have appalled Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt. We pay for others to do much of our civic work or sue the government for not doing the work they way we want it done. We have moved from citizens to taxpayers. As payers, we expect service for our money but not obligation. We must resist this trend that has taken us out of our schools, our community centers and even our churches. We have to re-engage services as a central community development paradigm again. It is through service that community thrives. Had the teenagers who killed their school colleagues been engaged in building community, they could not think of destroying it. Community development as a profession must go on record as a promoter of citizen service. Moreover, community development professionals must help create and rationalize a set of community service institutions similar to the Israeli Kibbutz. The community development profession should be at forefront of a call for one or two years national service for all young men and women before college and regardless of physical or social handicaps and even disregarding professional football or baseball contracts. All youth must learn the value of service beyond self. Service need not be in the military; it can be in

parks and playgrounds, hospitals or forest. However, no youth should be able to use family influence to seek preferred placement and every youth should have a set of choices for service.

Community developers should provide the social curriculum for the national service corps and lead in delivering it via our land grant colleges and community colleges across the nation. Nothing could be more nationally therapeutic and socially rewarding than a year of service away from home. My own children have done this and it has been more fulfilling than I realized. It has equipped them with a sense of civic morality that I could not have imparted in the home or a classroom. My own military service had the same profound impact on me. So, today the community development society needs to harness the energy of service as the bedrock of participation to restore our faith and confidence in our youth.

Finally, civic participation has to continue beyond youth service. Every member of the community should be expected, as in the Ancient Greece, to provide community service as the price of citizenship and not as a penalty for law violations. Every citizen should be expected to do a minimum of 40 hours of voluntary service every year. A similar system already exists in Switzerland and requires all people to serve on several weekends each year. Such service could range from sitting on court juries or school crossing aids or cleaning up the local freeway. Citizen service would be tied to the renewal of driver's licenses. Sophisticated computer inputs would track community service for IRS tax returns annually. Citizen with more than 40 hours up to a reasonable maximum could declare services as a family deduction at the same rate as a dependent with the limits set at two deductions annually. As part of this service citizens could volunteer time to work in political campaigns. We should give every candidate a list of volunteers, and equal amount of free newspaper space, radic and television time. No candidate would be allowed to have more than 1 or 2 paid workers even for a national campaign. Again, this responsibility on citizens would require the engagement of a set of professionals to organize and deliver it in a manner that benefited the entire nation as well as every community. Clearly, there can be some forms of abuse but the good will far outweigh the abuses. We know that there is abuse in the current income tax reporting system and the welfare and Medicare systems but we correct them. We do not abolish them. The restoration of face community through service is so critical to the continuation of democracy that we must take this chance to make our system work or we will see it deteriorate. Our democracy is worth our time.

The Creative Paradigm

Consuming closes off many aspects of adventure. As we consume more we lose interest in pursuing more ideas. We read less and mentioned before. We experiment on drugs and not on creating new ideas. We take the easy way out. Creativity is hard. It is so hard that students now order term papers over the Internet.

If, we as a nation stop inventing and creating we will lose our culture. Futurists are already forecasting the demise of most cultures as the computer replaces the outside world as the communication of choice. As a result, the creativity that went into developing community and ethnic stories, songs and artistic expression will diminish or even die away. Cultures, like wildlife will disappear very quickly. As they disappear the creative juices that spawn them will dry up. This will lead to a society that is increasingly bored with themselves. We have seen some of this already in the problems of suburban communities that provide malls as the only

form of outlet for local teenagers. They have rebelled with graffiti. At least graffiti shows a live mind willing to take chances. Computer graffiti will soon replace visual graffiti. This art form will pop up on your computer screen. It will be harmless, unlike the viruses but it will be anti-social and in the message and anti-democratic. It will be a new form of computer terrorism.

Since we know that the world is increasingly alien for many people, we can move to channel this form of anthropopathy into conduct that creates, rather than conduct that aims to destroy. The ability to destroy seems to be gaining prominence in every form. Anti-human behavior is celebrated in movies and on the evening news as we witness violence and ethnic cleansing. The Community Development paradigm of creative collaborative problem solving must become a new core value for using both science and social relationships that spring boards for creativity. Community development already embraces the sharing of culture and the outpouring of artistic expression. Now community development must develop and embrace the arts as a central focus for the restoration of communalism and values sharing and caring. A new set of community artistic developers will need to be recognized and incorporated in our governmental and societal bodies to promote artistic expression over senseless rage. We have more power to be creative than ever. We have to recognize this as an essential value of community building and not an adjunct to the landscape. We must learn to express our selves to grow a pluralistic democracy that respects itself to recreate itself.

A Sustainable Paradigm

Few words are as over used as sustainable. No one is sure what it means. Yet, in almost all, previous societies the world was governed by it. It has only come to be, in this century, that man could take more from the earth than he needs or wants. Nature is sustaining. We have interrupted the flows of nature on a massive scale. We no longer know how to turn nature back on. If we stop some of our environmentally poor practices, like the use of pesticides and fertilizers, we will interrupt the food supply or create anew cycle of diseases. We are out of control. It is clear that we do not know the path back to nature. We will have 6 billion people on the planet soon. We cannot sustain them at the lifestyle that we have communicated to them as natural and normal expectations. If they all eat meat and drive cars, the world will come to a very tragic and quick end. On the other hand, why should the wealthy in the Northern Hemisphere live an unsustainable life style and condemn most of the Southern Hemisphere to hopeless poverty. Any increase in the standard of living of the poorest of the worlds' communities is at the expense of the wealthiest. We need a new, world community paradigm to replace our small national and local paradigms. We need to use the community development paradigm to become connected with and owners of the global community and stewards of its people and its land.

Community Development in its widest form must help us use its territorial dimension to embrace the wider world. As we develop new tools and technologies, the community development profession must help us see the global impacts and importance of these new tools. As we invest in food creation, energy development, the entire world must gain access to the benefits of new technology. At the turn of the century, community development was the tool to spread the notions of the good of technology to bring people together and enrich lives; it must do so again across the globe. Community development must become an international and not just a local ethic and philosophy. We can with modern communications technology connect the world to new modes of understand and new community development knowledge.

The forest worker in the Amazon's plight should be visible to American as we consume more food. We can now plot the character of these transgressions on people and nation. Community Developers must be prepared to help design new ways of accomplishing these tasks so that we do not rob one segment of the world to enhance another. We are bound to a common community across the globe. Community developers must inform the world sustainability paradigm so that we can forge a common future with the people and natural systems of the world.

Our Community Challenge

It is now our challenge to forge a new profession on old roots. We have to do this to save our communities and ourselves. As community developers we know that the best way to build a civilization is to engage people in the crafting of it. We have to end the retreat from the national goal of creating community. We have to resist all attempts to accept community as cyberspace or a commodity. We have to be the new voice of democracy-we must create the paradigm of tomorrow based on the goals of the past. We must become a profession and not merely a group of skilled practitioner. We have to place the notion of community at the intersection of democracy. We must make certain that people and plans are not separated intellectually, economically or physically. We must work for the development of a diverse America that creates a better dream. The next century will open new doors for the creation of community, not just on this planet but others as well. Before, we venture into space, let us as a Community Development Society write a new Magna Carta for a sustainable world community that we can take anywhere in the universe with pride.

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